

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 57th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION COMMITTEE ON FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN DANIEL FUCHS**, on March 8, 2001 at 3 P.M., in Room 152 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Rep. Daniel Fuchs, Chairman (R)
Rep. Joe Balyeat, Vice Chairman (R)
Rep. Keith Bales (R)
Rep. Debby Barrett (R)
Rep. Paul Clark (D)
Rep. Ronald Devlin (R)
Rep. Tom Facey (D)
Rep. Nancy Fritz (D)
Rep. Steven Gallus (D)
Rep. Gail Gutsche (D)
Rep. Larry Jent (D)
Rep. Jeff Laszloffy (R)
Rep. Diane Rice (R)
Rep. Rick Ripley (R)
Rep. Allen Rome (R)
Rep. Jim Shockley (R)
Rep. Donald Steinbeisser (R)
Rep. Bill Thomas (R)
Rep. Brett Tramelli (D)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: Rep. George Golie, Vice Chairman (D)

Staff Present: Linda Keim, Committee Secretary
Doug Sternberg, Legislative Branch

Please Note: These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing(s) & Date(s) Posted: SB 262, 3/5/2001; SB 285,
3/5/2001

Executive Action: None

HEARING ON SB 262

Sponsor: SENATOR JACK WELLS, SD 14, BOZEMAN

Proponents: Pam Bucy, Department of Justice
Wendy Young, WEEL, low income organization
Sharon Hoff-Broadaway, Montana Catholic Conference

Opponents: Gary Marbut, Montana Shooting Sports Association,
Western Montana Fish and Game Association, Montana
Women's Shooting Association, and Big Sky
Practical Shooting Club.

Informational Witnesses: Mary Ann Wellbanks, Child Support
Enforcement Division, DPHHS

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

SENATOR JACK WELLS, SD 14, BOZEMAN said SB 262 has the same language as one he introduced in the special session, but time ran out before it could go through the House. It is an attempt to get capability to remove the social security number (SS#) requirement on Montana hunting, fishing or trapping license or a wildlife conservation license. In order to do that and still meet approval of the Governor's office, they have added contingency language. There are three phases to the bill: one it applies to deadbeat parents under age 18, second phase applies to resident hunters and fishermen, and third phase applies to all resident and nonresidents. The contingency language is based upon requests by the Department of Health and Human Services asking the federal government for exemptions from the requirement to use this number. If they get those exemptions, certain portions of the law are taken out and people will be allowed to apply for the licenses without using their SS#. It is carefully worded so it won't jeopardize possibility of federal support and legislation that would allow collection of support from deadbeat parents. A lot of people don't want the contingency language there and just want to go ahead and not require the SS#, and essentially take on the Feds. Wants to carry a bill he thought the Governor might sign, so that is the reason for the language. There is another bill coming from the House side that basically says, just take this requirement away. Suggests passing both bills through the system and when it gets to the Governor, she can make a decision based upon what has been achieved through requests and applications for exemptions. If it appears they are willing to help us out, or if she doesn't want to put any of these funds in jeopardy, maybe she would sign the House bill. He feels both possibilities should be presented to the Governor.

Proponents' Testimony:

Pam Bucy, Assistant Attorney General in the Department of Justice, said they support SB 262 because of the rise in the crime of identity theft. This is a crime when someone uses your name and usually your social security number to obtain credit, loans, employment, health care services, etc. Has been involved in investigation and prosecution of identity theft cases and a common denominator is the use of a victim's SS#. The Federal Trade Commission web site registered 80,000 complaints last year, and 23% were directly related to SS# theft. Identity theft is the fastest rising crime in the nation. Each year there are 500,000 victims of identity theft in America; losses are more than \$745,000,000. Montana is one of only eight states that doesn't have some form of legislation that prevents this kind of crime. As a result, the Department of Justice has asked for legislation to create the offense of identity theft. It takes victims years to recover from the losses and fix their credit history with all the problems this creates. The Attorney General's office is working to address this. The conflict is that if the SS# is not collected, DPHHS could lose the federal funding they receive for child support enforcement. They would like to take on the Feds, but want to make sure that is an option. This bill is the best bet at this time.

Wendy Young, representing a low income organization called WEEL, said their members are on assistance and some have left assistance to become the working poor of Montana. The money they are in jeopardy of losing is over \$100,000,000 for the biennium. Is aware of the other bill, but feels that if we did not have the contingency language in there, we could possibly lose that money and it would fall to the state to cover that burden. Urges the committee to pass the bill as it is.

Sharon Hoff-Brodaway, Montana Catholic Conference said she is not enamored about putting her SS# on her fishing license; however she is not willing to sacrifice people's opportunity to eat, have housing and child care and possibly find jobs. Urges support of SB 262.

Opponents' Testimony:

Gary Marbut, Montana Shooting Sports Association, Western Montana Fish and Game Association, Montana Women's Shooting Association, and the Big Sky Practical Shooting Club. Said all are concerned about having to give SS# in order to get hunting and fishing licenses, but don't feel SB 262 is the right vehicle to do this. **Former REP. BOB CLARK** is one of many who doesn't fish any longer because he didn't want to give out his SS# to purchase a license.

Testimony on two other bills indicated there are other states that have not complied with the federal requirements on SS#, and they have not lost any welfare money. This is another federal threat. It is not as significant a risk as it may have been held up to be in the past. Feels this bill is unnecessary, as HB 282 was passed previously to eliminate SS# on hunting and fishing licenses. Concerned that contingencies in this bill will not be met. The state has already been told verbally during testimony on HB 282 that the exemption they requested is not going to be granted. There is a constitutional right to privacy in Montana. When the legislature required SS# on hunting and fishing licenses last session, they were concerned the about the right to privacy and about the step toward the loss of other constitutional rights. If you set this precedent, this will be very persuasive to the next legislature. Asks that SB 262 be tabled just like HB 388 was, which is identical except for one provision.

Informational Witnesses:

Mary Ann Wellbank, Child Support Enforcement Division, Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) said there were two bills before this committee and she is not going to go through the same information. Refer to the 2/01/01 memo she gave to the committee giving the status of what is going on at the federal level. It listed each state that is not in compliance, the consequences of noncompliance, any litigation and exemption requests made by Montana and other states. Montana submitted its exemption request 8/31/00, and they have been expecting to hear for quite some time. She heard today that the request is on hold. She has all kinds of information available if anyone has questions.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

CHAIRMAN FUCHS asked if it would be okay to move this bill along to the Governor to get Washington off dead center; what is your feeling? **Mary Ann Wellbank** said there wouldn't be any harm in moving this bill along. It works for the department.

Closing by Sponsor:

SENATOR WELLS said that Governor Martz wrote a personal letter to President Bush on this issue about two weeks ago. Has not seen the letter, but it may have some effect. In a sense, he agrees with **Gary Marbut**, but **SENATOR WELLS** is afraid the Governor won't take that risk. Wants to present her with options, various alternative ways she can go, so made the bill this way.

HEARING ON SB 285

Sponsor: **SENATOR WALTER MCNUTT, SD 50, SIDNEY**

Proponents: Tom Hogan, Public Land Private Wildlife Council (PLPW)
Verle Rademacher, PLPW
Lee Gustafson, PLPW
John Gibson, Public Land Access Association
Carl Koski, Laurel, Self
Bryan Dunn, PLPW
Jean Johnson, Montana Outfitters and Guides Assn.
Ed Parsons, Billings, Self
Duane Karey, Montana Bow Hunters Assn.
John Fogarty, Montana Sportsmen
Paul Sihler, Fish, Wildlife and Parks
David Dittloff, Montana Wildlife Federation

Opponents: None

Informational Witnesses: None

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

SENATOR WALTER MCNUTT, SD 50, SIDNEY said SB 285 is a request of PLPW which has been working since the 1999 Session. A consensus has been reached on this bill to enhance the block management program which is currently funded by the variable price of a guaranteed nonresident license. No resident money is currently going into the program. Resident hunters want ownership in this program and feel it needs to be expanded since it does afford hunting access. As a result of legislation in 1993 the PLPW Council was established in statute. The requirement was a report to the Governor. The committee was to look at several different areas and bring that report back to the legislature, as they did. Highlights are: preserve Montana hunting heritage, provide access on private and isolated public land, reduce landowner impacts related to hunting access, provide tangible incentives to landowners who allow public hunting, and help outfitters stabilize their industry and improve their image. Since the advent of block management, hunting groups, nonresident hunters, as well as resident hunters want to lease land for access purposes. Now that there is a monetary value attached to this, it will be an ongoing project. SB 285 changes the cap from \$8,000 to \$12,000 and will be getting into a process of trying to enhance block management through voluntary programs.

Proponents' Testimony:

Tom Hogan, Private Land Public Wildlife Council (PLPW) said the council was appointed by the Governor and charged to review the current block management program and make suggestions for funding, modifications, or improvements needed to achieve the objectives of the program. SB 285 is the result of two years of work, and was reached in consensus. The majority of this was put out for public comment and favorable comment was received. They have tried to make this a workable solution for everyone. Included in the bill would be more access to private land, and a new portion that would offer access to public land; an important aspect of this bill. Also talked about increase for more upland game bird hunting; need more places to hunt. Have provisions to increase the size of block management, hoping to enroll 200 or so new landowners. Another issue is improving block management areas and services. In the past this was a problem, by enrolling more acres, they hope to end the over-hunting that has happened. Have 80% favorable rating on block management. Some provision for increased competition for landowners to raise the cap to \$12,000 is one of them. Talked about increasing payment to existing landowners, and a block management working group is looking at a different method of paying the existing cooperators. Most important is the fact that at their request, resident sportsmen are being asked to contribute to it, and it will be partially funded by Montana residents.

Verle Rademacher, PLPW, from White Sulphur Springs said this legislation offers funding from residents and nonresidents to generate money for improved hunter access to private and public lands. The council proposes resident hunters would pay a \$2 hunting access enhancement fee. Nonresident hunters would pay a \$10 hunting access enhancement fee. This would come into effect the first time in any license year that the wildlife conservation license is used as a prerequisite to purchase a hunting license. The additional enhancement fees generated by this legislation are to encourage enhanced hunting access through hunter management and hunter access programs. Fees are chargeable only once during any license year. Language in this bill also provides authority for FWP to administer landowner assistance to encourage public access to private and public lands for hunting. This new revenue would be used for the following: improving hunting access to public lands, marking access and public land boundaries, establishing access for corridors to public land and negotiating long term access agreements, increasing the size of the current block management program, improving block management programs and service, patrolling hunter assistance services, installing boundary markings, permanent signs and information boards, and raising current landowner incentive cap from \$8,000 to \$12,000. 52 out of 1004 landowners would qualify; this would open new land

to hunting. Average hunter day use is 1.081 hunter days. Average acreage is 23,887 acres. Areas with land enough to provide high hunter use days are in high demand, and often provide critical wildlife management components. Current statutes do not allow for exceptions to the \$8,000 cap on a landowner qualifying for the maximum payment. This bill would add large portions of new land to the program. These are prime lands for dispersed hunting opportunities, and give the largest number of hunter days. Improving upland game bird hunting access. The new access laws have increased pressure for accessible bird hunting areas. We feel this will provide potential increased program costs due to inflation; current block management incentive payments are based on 1996 schedules. Program materials like signs, maps, and permission books are subject to inflation on printing and distribution. This program was termed by former Governor Mark Racicot as a minor miracle in landowner and sports person's relations. This continues to be the leading cooperative venture in the United States and has led to new programs in other states where increased hunting access has been negotiated. The block management program is a success and will continue to be a success if we can tap funding sources.

Lee Gustafson, PLPW, and a retired business owner, Billings said this bill is the culmination of many years of work of volunteer work, and they are required by statute to report to the legislature. The bill came as a result of comment from private landowners, sportsmen, clubs and organizations. All agree that access is the biggest issue for preserving Montana's hunting heritage. Montana has the game, the habitat, and the regulatory system; what we don't have is the access. This bill puts into place the remaining elements of the 1993 agreements between landowners, sportsmen, and outfitters by solidifying the resident and nonresident non-outfitted contribution to the program. The bill officially authorizes including public land in the hunting access enhancement program. Funding will provide authorization and a modest amount of money to facilitate negotiation of access corridors. This bill will preserve bird hunting opportunities for future generations. These properties are in demand and could be dominated by commercial interests in coming decades. Increased payments to landowners are important because of situations where increased payments are needed to attract and keep quality cooperators. He does not see this as a tax increase; he sees it as a cooperative agreement between citizens that will advance and enhance a model program for the nation; a testimony to the foresight of previous legislatures.

John Gibson, Public Land Access Association, said he would emphasize several issues. He recalls sitting on the board of Montana Wildlife Federation when clubs from Kalispell to Glendive were represented. The question was asked whether there should be

a resident contribution to block management. The answer was yes, all felt there should be. Many see this as a way of saying thank you with our dollars to the landowners who enter this program. The biggest threat to block management is that it is overwhelmed by demand, that we cannot expand it, and the quality of the hunting experience will be reduced, as a result. This money comes from sportsmen; these are not general taxpayer dollars.

Carl Koski, of Laurel, representing himself said he has been hunting for 60 years. SB 285 is a win-win situation because crowding is a dangerous thing. This bill will open corridors that will alleviate some of the pressure. There are a lot of landowners being pressured because there are not enough block management areas. Need to keep up our heritage as an investment in the future. This will guarantee that his grandchildren will have hunting like he had. Old timers benefit from this. Many quit hunting because they were tired of being refused permission, so they started going in the high country and that is becoming difficult. Young hunters will benefit, as it will open up some nearby pheasant areas and they can be shown the proper techniques to become responsible hunters. Unethical, irresponsible hunters will be alleviated or eliminated under block management. Many ranchers are complaining about wildlife ravaging their hay; with block management the hunters can help control the animals and keep populations down. When landowners are paid for allowing hunters on their place, the relationship between hunters and landowners will improve.

Brian Dunn, PLPW, pheasant hunter said he was invited to buy into a pheasant hunting lease that was close to town and would always provide a pheasant or two. The lease was for 60 acres, and cost \$11,000 with 11 people buying in, at \$1,000 apiece. He came back to a PLPW meeting where they said he might have a chance to pay only \$2 and he could hunt on 1,000,000 acres. He wants to go where he is welcome and wouldn't have to negotiate a lease. This has wide support: landowners, sports people, outfitters. The bill has a limited liability clause that protects landowners, so there is some safety too.

Jean Johnson, Montana Outfitters and Guides Association said she has a different perspective. Billings Rod and Gun Club asked MOGA to help them with this bill. The time has come for the sportsmen to help support this program. Asks for support.

Ed Parsons, Billings, representing himself said his grandfather always had a lot of hunting available, his own and neighbor land, but times have changed, and he didn't inherit land to hunt on. Decided that even if he had to hunt as a nonresident in Montana that he would do it. Started in an area that has been in block

management from the earliest days up to the present. If he would have had to pay an outfitter, he wouldn't have hunted. For a lot of years, he also felt he and his son could carry their own packs and didn't want or need people helping them. There is evidence hunters are hunting too heavily in some places. On the other hand, there are a number of farmers and ranchers interested in coming into the program and there isn't enough money available. There was local input on decision making; this program was developed after a lot of discussion, with resident involvement in paying for program. Surprised to find the block management program was built on money from other states. We need to run our own affairs; it doesn't make sense to depend on other people. Need to take full advantage of a good program and use its full potential.

Duane Kailey, Montana Bow Hunters Association said most of what he had planned to say has already been said. A major threat facing hunters is access. SB 285 will increase that access and help spread out the hunter numbers that are already imposing on some of the public land. SB 285 will also help compensate the landowners already in the program and help entice future farmers and ranchers to join the program. SB 285 will allow Montana residents to take control and ownership of block management.

John Fogarty, resident sportsman from Billings said they really want SB 285 passed. He presented written testimony for the record, **EXHIBIT(fih53a01)**.

Paul Sihler, Fish, Wildlife and Parks presented written testimony for the record, **EXHIBIT(fih53a02)**. He said the existing program in the 2000 hunting season has over 1,000 landowners, 7.8 million acres across the state, and over 300,000 hunter days of recreation. Based on survey data, they know the program is successful from the hunter perspective. Of 6,000 hunter comment cards that were returned, over 80% of those block management hunters saw species they were hunting. Over 40% bagged the game they were hunting, and 80% rated their block management experience as positive. It also seems to be working from the landowner perspective; each year 95% of the landowners seek re-enrollment. This bill would expand a program that has worked in block management. SB 285 would direct funding to the fledgling public access program. An amendment was added on Page 2, Lines 13-16: "Participation in a program established under this section is voluntary. A lease, acquisition or other arrangement for public access across private property that is initiated through a program established under this part must be negotiated on a cooperative basis and may only be initiated with the voluntary participation of private landowners". This bill provides the department with a mechanism to work with private landowners to

gain access to isolated tracts of public land that have hunting value.

David Dittloff, Montana Wildlife Federation said they strongly support SB 285 and would like to see it passed. Access is a major concern for Montana hunters because access to private lands is reduced every year. Block management is the best program in the nation. It compensates private landowners, and opens up private land to resident and nonresident hunters in a way that is equitable and reaffirms the public trust. Concerning Section 4, the resident contribution; they would gladly pay the \$2 for the increased access that the fees would generate. The biggest problem with block management, as it currently stands, is that there are too many hunters on too little land. Funding increases are necessary to alleviate this problem. Hunters utilizing block management hit it hard the first week or two of the hunting season and the game get smart and move to adjacent property that has lower hunting pressure because it doesn't have access. Increasing the funding to block management will allow more land to be entered into the program and spread out the hunting opportunities. SB 285 will allow this successful program to expand to meet demand.

Opponents' Testimony: None

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

REP. BALYEAT asked how many resident hunters would pay the \$2 fee? **Paul Sihler, FWP** checked the fiscal note and said they made an assumption that 165,000 residents would pay the fee. **REP. BALYEAT** said the fiscal note starts out saying there are 190,000 residents buying hunting licenses, and goes on to say that only 165,000 would pay the fee; why the 25,000 difference? **Paul Sihler** said that within the 190,000 there are 50,000 senior or disabled hunters who have some hunting privilege associated with their license and wouldn't have to buy another license that would trigger the \$2. FWP is assuming that half of those 50,000 would buy another license that would trigger the \$2. **REP. BALYEAT** asked how many resident hunters use block management? **Paul Sihler** deferred to **Allan Charles, FWP** who said that 80% of the people statewide that use block management are resident hunters. If you apply that to 80% of the hunter days and you take 80% of approximately 150,000 hunters, that will give you the answer.

REP. BALYEAT stated he was going to ask **Bryan Dunn, PLPW** a series of questions quoting various things other witnesses have said and get his response to them, rather than getting each of the other proponents to testify again. **REP. BALYEAT** said **Mr. Gibson** stated that "all sportsmen feel there should be a resident contribution

to block management"; then he changed it to "all sportsmen at that meeting". **REP. BALLYEAT** stated that the avid hunters say it is worth it, the others say no more. As an alternative to a mandatory fee increase, would you accept an amendment that changes the funding mechanism to a voluntary \$10 block management permit very similar to the \$10 state lands permit which we already have in place, where people cannot hunt on state land unless they have the \$10 permit. Using that same approach, it seems that the people who are using it would pay for it, it would be voluntary, probably raise the same amount of money, and people who did not want to use block management wouldn't have to see their license fees increase again. **Bryan Dunn** said it is true that the more you hunt, the more you are willing to pay the \$2. It is logical that the cost goes down if you hunt more. There is wide support for this, he talked to a lot of those same people. When block management is in the area, it pulls pressure off the other places. He feels there is overwhelming support for this, even if not every single person agrees with it. There was lots of opposition from the sportsmen about the tag and they gave it up. People said they didn't mind paying it, but they didn't want another tag. This was discussed, but it wasn't politically feasible. **REP. BALLYEAT** asked about the \$10 per hunter day fee that is paid to landowners. Why wouldn't it be acceptable if someone using block management pays for their first day of their use? **Bryan Dunn** said he raised that issue himself on the committee, and there was wide opposition to having another tag. **REP. BALLYEAT** said another person said "there is no such thing as a free lunch". It seems what we are asking is for people not using block management to pay more than their fair share, and vice versa. Doesn't that point to asking people to pay for a voluntary stamp that covers their first day of use? **Bryan Dunn** said if you don't hunt block management, you still benefit, because there is only so much land and you're not competing with as many people on the private land you have permission to hunt on. **REP. BALLYEAT** said when he and other candidates appeared before the Headwaters FWP committee, 90% of the people in the room supported the mandatory \$2 fee. Then he suggested the approach of a voluntary block management stamp, and 80% to 90% in the room said they would prefer the voluntary approach. He feels the state of Montana is jumping into the federal government category by imposing a mandatory fee on everybody, who will start resenting it if they are not using it. If we can't come to agreement on whether to use a voluntary stamp or a \$2 mandatory fee increase, is it necessary to have any kind of fee increases, or is the program functioning well right now, as some testimony has said? **Bryan Dunn** said nothing is absolutely necessary, however this is a great improvement. This is 1,000,000 acres to hunt on for \$2. The government is not pushing this; it is grass roots sportsmen, landowners and outfitters. His concern is this

is going to collapse politically if we go with what **REP. BALLYEAT** is proposing. It is something that works, something that people believe in. The people **Bryan Dunn** has been talking to don't consider this a fee, they say they want to pay the \$2.

REP. CLARK said this is becoming a policy issue. Please share with the committee why it is good public policy to go about this process in this particular way? **Verle Rademacher** said **REP. BALLYEAT** has a strong feeling about personal rights and about people getting into his pocketbook. But, we must have resident buy in so that we can say, yes, as a resident I bought a portion of this. Block management is the greatest thing since ice cream. As a bird hunter, and this fall as an antelope hunter on a large ranch, he was the only hunter on the ranch for two days. Buying a \$10 stamp takes more administration on the part of FWP. It uses a portion of the money to enlarge government and create more of a headache for the person selling licenses. The \$2 is the best buy right now in FWP management.

REP. CLARK said this issue is not going to go away. Why is an entire state buy in preferable to a partial state buy in of only users? **Lee Gustafson** said they discussed the stamp extensively. There are questions of increased enforcement problems, the additional nuisance of another specific stamp, of a voluntary stamp - whether it would raise enough money to make a significant contribution, and the question of democratic access to the game. The public trust doctrine. We don't want a system where by buying a permit, people are buying special access to game. As to why the \$2 is acceptable by everyone and good public policy, there is more than just the block management program involved with this bill, there is the public land access. The public land belongs to everyone. Having additional mechanisms available to access public land would increase everyone's opportunities, and we have the bird hunting aspect which is important. The most important things are 1) that it benefits everybody, not just the users, and 2) we have the public land access and additional land access enhancement possibilities as a result of this legislation.

REP. CLARK asked how the landowner is involved, how many landowners are waiting for access to this program, and what the landowner's investment is in the continuation of this program? **Allan Charles, FWP** said there are 1004 landowners enrolled in the program with 7.8 million acres. They also had 220-250 landowners who wanted to get in but could not be accommodated. Additionally they have landowners who have indicated a desire to enter into hunting access corridor agreements where their own land isn't being hunted, but where the public has an opportunity to hunt the private land behind. We have a large pool of landowners in Montana, 23,000 that own at least a section of land. Have 1,000

in block management. There is a huge potential to work with other landowners building more hunting access agreements. Landowners have played a key part in developing this program. The mid 1980's saw a marked decrease in public hunting access. The agricultural economy is in trouble; people are looking for ways to stay on the land and deal with increasing public desire for recreation. This program is a cooperative agreement where the department works with landowners to try to manage the hunters and offset the impacts of inviting the public onto the land. Landowners have said that helping manage the impact, and providing tangible incentives is in their best interests. In the case of block management, the average payment of \$2700 is not significant. It is the recognition of landowners providing habitat for the state's wildlife, of the impacts associated with inviting the public onto the land. Landowners say this is a step in the right direction. If there is going to be future public opportunity on private land, it will be through programs like this.

REP. BARRETT voiced support and said she will support it. She said there were 50 head of elk in the area and they had no impact when she first came to her ranch 30 years ago. There was only a handful of hunters, and no noxious weed; this was pleasant. Now there are 3200 elk in the area, and numerous hunters. This is something that works in her area and she will support it.

REP. LASZLOFFY said he does not vote for fee increases either. If they voted for every \$2 and \$1 fee that have come before this committee just this session, the conservation licenses would be up by \$30 now. He has gotten more mail on this issue than he has on education funding and deregulation combined, and it has all been positive. Will vote for this legislation, however. As a member of the Billings Rod and Gun Club, what percentage of your members do not support this legislation? **John Gibson, Public Land Access Association** said he would guess 10% wouldn't support it. They wouldn't support anything!

Closing by Sponsor:

SENATOR MCNUTT said there is a balance in Montana, and there is private land and public land. You ask, why would we do this statewide? It is to maintain the balance. But the bill goes further than just paying \$2 for block management. We are going to try to establish access to private lands and enhance upland game bird habitat. That will help everyone. It was a pleasure to work on this project. If you look at this with the perspective that this is public game, and all ranches and farms are impacted, a \$2 fee increase on a conservation hunting license is fair and equitable because we all benefit.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 4:55 P.M.

REP. DANIEL FUCHS, Chairman

LINDA KEIM, Secretary

DF/LK

EXHIBIT (fih53aad)